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**Attorney General Biden announces expansion of efforts in statewide initiative
to combat crime in Delaware's communities**

Rehoboth Beach –Attorney General Joseph R. Biden, III today announced that the Delaware Department of Justice has used the newly-enhanced Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act to actively combat crime across the state.

Attorney General Biden explained that the Department of Justice today issued written notices of its intent to sue the owners of five (5) residential properties, including a property down the street from the site of his announcement in West Rehoboth. These notices warn the property owners that a nuisance exists on their land. In late June the Department of Justice sent similar notices to the owners of four (4) residential properties in New Castle County.

“We’re here – prosecutors, police, and concerned citizens – to send a clear message that it doesn’t matter where you are”, Attorney General Biden stated. “From downtown Wilmington to our downstate communities, we will take active measures to clean up the few bad apples poisoning our neighborhoods.”

These notices state that the Department of Justice has determined that a nuisance exists on the property. They give property owners the choice of either voluntarily cooperating with the Department of Justice and state and local law enforcement agencies to clean up the illegal activity on their properties, or of defending themselves in court and ultimately being forced to clean up their properties by court order.

The properties represented by the notices announced today span each of Delaware’s three counties, and include rural as well as urban locations. Five (5) of these properties are located in the city of Wilmington and one each are located in Newark, Greenwood, Dover, and West Rehoboth.

Attorney General Biden highlighted some of the drug crimes that have taken place in the properties being targeted. A recent Delaware State Police undercover drug investigation focused on the neighborhood surrounding the West Side New Beginnings Community Youth Center, the site of today’s announcement. It resulted in the arrest of 26 people, including 18 who were charged with delivering cocaine. Last month over 51 grams of crack cocaine were seized from the Dover property. Finally, over 176 grams of crack cocaine and numerous firearms were seized from the properties in Wilmington.

Delaware's Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act clarifies the process law enforcement can use to take action against nuisance properties. Upon a finding that a residential or commercial property is conducting or permitting drug distribution, prostitution, or other illegal drug activity, the Department of Justice may bring a civil action to abate the activity. Abatement actions can take the form of a variety of possible remedies, including the closure of a property.

The Delaware Department of Justice is actively identifying nuisance properties across Delaware, with the cooperation of state and local law enforcement agencies and input from local authorities, state legislators, civic associations and community organizations. This cooperation has led the Department of Justice to focus on egregious cases that have had the most negative impact on their neighborhoods.

Ridding Delaware's communities of nuisance properties will provide myriad benefits, including reduced crime, safer neighborhoods for families, and community pride.

Attorney General Biden stated, "The notices announced today demonstrate the statewide reach of the Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act, from seedy motels in New Castle to the house you won't let your kids walk by in Rehoboth. Law enforcement is actively using the Act to aggressively weed out the properties poisoning the communities around them."

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